792 water, is performed.

The Hlóbon then takes a cotton scarf called "sungdrut," ties a knot in it, spits upon it, and ties it round the "Tsunchhung's" neck, muttering certain incantations while so doing. The "Tsunchhang" or "Geytshul" is then [85] made over to a Lama of the monastery, (selected either by himself, his friends, or the Hlóbon), who is termed his "Geyrgan" or "priestly teacher," and who becomes responsible for the education of his charge. The neophyte has then to learn by heart certain religious books, after which the Lámás assemble and examine him. If the result is satisfactory, he becomes a "Geylong" or full monk. If his circumstances permit of it, he is supposed to give a feast, (generally called "Mangja" and meaning "mangpo chha" or "much tea") to the Lamas consisting, in the case of red-caps, of tea (mangja) soup (paktsha) and glookchhang (examination beer), and in the case of yellow caps of tea only; at the same time he receives a "khatak" or "scarf of salutation" from the Hlobon, the Chhakdzot, his "Geyrgan" and from each of the "Geylongs" of his monastery, who congratulate him upon his admission into the priesthood.

After this, the monk has only three things to learn viz., (1) "kar" (Sanskrit word) or "rtseyches" (Tibetan word) i.e., the religious mumming dance (2) "thik" i.e., the steps, used when walking round in the intervals between the dances (3) yángs i.e., the way to intone the prayers.

671 If a Láma, of whatever rank, wishes to leave the priesthood and return to secular life, he is at liberty to do so. According to civil law, he has the right to leave the priesthood whenever he pleases, but according to religious law, he cannot leave unless he has received permission from the monastery authorities, so to do. According to custom, he notifies to the Abbot his desire to go, and the Abbot then calls the Lámás together, explains the matter, and obtains from the meeting, permission for the monk to renounce his priestly calling.

A monk who has so left the priesthood is called "banlok."

792 795 688 Among the Geylukspa or yellow sect, if a monk commits a trivial offence, he is admonished for the first few times, and if this has no effect, he is turned out of the priesthood. If the offence committed is a grave one, the sinner is warned once, and on a repetition of the offence, he is scourged and expelled from the priesthood, or if the offence be a very heinous one, he is at

lives. For the beliefs and superstitions instilled by the lamas since their girlhood are not easily displaced.

I also learned that perhaps 50 per cent of the polyandric marriages are happy ones. Many are not. One *magpa* affair I ran into is an unhappy one. This is the case of the Tingzingpa family of Khalatse below Leh. The man, imported into the family to provide the missing male line of descent, is in love not with the elder sister but with the younger one. The older sister is left out in the cold. She receives no husbandly attentions. In August 1951 she was planning to leave the home, go to Leh, and marry a Moslem.

The wife in a polyandric marriage, like a *magpa*, often has her favorites. I also found an example of that in Khalatse. The man's name is Thundup Drambuchanpa. He is a disconsolate, middle-aged man with five brothers. They are married to Phuti. Thundup thought he had first claim to Phuti. After all, he owned the whole family inheritance. It was he who married Phuti. His brothers were only the beneficiaries of his marriage. They should occupy second place and stay in the background. Not so. His youngest brother, Rigzen, had taken over. He got all the attention, all the affection of Phuti. Thundup was mad, thoroughly mad. Phuti and Rigzen would not even let him eat at the same table with them. He had to wait to eat until they finished. Then he got only the leftovers, and they were cold.

"Is that just?" he asked. "Why does not Rigzen leave?"

But Rigzen, with the connivance of Phuti, was there to stay. He had taken over the management of the farm and was squeezing Thundup out.

The reverse happened to Wangyal of Leh. He was isolated, in fact quarantined, from the family life. The wife gave all her devotion to the elder brother. When that happens in Ladakh, the younger brother commonly leaves the family. Some become coolies; others seek work in Yarkand, Kyelang, Srinagar, Manali; others become lamas. Wangyal did not want to do any of those things. The new law of Kashmir declared polyandry illegal; it

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abolished primogeniture and decreed that on the death of the father any son could get a partition of the ancestral home and claim his fraction of it.

That was what Wangyal decided to do. He would prove to the elder brother and their wife that he could not be frozen out of his family life.

And so he went to see the Tehsildar. But that was only the beginning of his troubles. The pressure of the village is on the side of the maintenance of the family and against the breaking up of the estate. The influence of the lamas is behind polyandry. The Tehsildar told Wangyal to go see his lamas at Spitok. He walked the six miles and walked back. Weeks passed. Nothing happened. For months he was shuttled between the lamas of Spitok and the officials of Leh.

"If I had money, perhaps I could bribe someone to do me justice," he complained to me. "But I am penniless."

"What do you plan now?"

"Perhaps I can find work in Srinagar," he said sorrowfully.

Younger sons frequently rebel. Girls about to be married to a group of brothers sometimes defy the parental command. Choskyit, who lived at Basgo, a village below Leh on the Indus, defied her father. He ordered her to marry seven sons. She pleaded and begged and eventually refused. She left Basgo at night and fled to Leh. She was disowned and became an outlaw from her family. Later she became a Christian, converted by the Moravian missionaries at Leh. Her younger sister, however, obliged and married the seven brothers.

Such revolts as Choskyit's are not common. They seldom happen in the poorer families. But these days they happen more frequently among the upper classes. A few years back, a prominent Tibetan girl, educated abroad, married a boy in Lhasa. His mother insisted that the girl be the wife of the younger brother too. She flatly refused. The wrath of the family descended upon her. So she left and was gone five years. She would not return until a firm

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423 427 times the seed (the average yield for Ladakh is ten to one, the return on the best land being twenty to one, the return on the poorest, five to one).

(2) The landlord furnishes the seed and gets 50 per cent of the crop.

(3) The tenant furnishes the seed, labor, work animals, and water and pays the landlord 50 per cent of the crop.

(4) The landlord gets five rupees (about one dollar) for every two *kanals* (one *kanal* equals one sixteenth acre) of land, the rent being paid in cash or crops.

This fourth method is now the most common one; and whether the monastery collects cash or crops depends on the deal made with the individual farmer.

426 Loans and usury cut down the tenant's share considerably. Historically, a landlord advancing eighty-two rupees gets twenty rupees in interest. Professional moneylenders used to charge as much if not more. The stories of usurious interest in Ladakh and Tibet would make even our avaricious loan sharks wince.

792 426 452 The monasteries have done their share of exploitation, but their management of agricultural credit has usually been more humane than that of other creditors. If a debtor was hopelessly involved, the monastery would take over one half of the land for three years. If the debt was not liquidated in that period, the land would be restored to the debtor and the debt written off. Monasteries seldom allowed land to be alienated permanently for debt. Their credit system bore heavily on tenant and landowner alike. But relatively speaking, the monastery did not exploit the farmer through avaricious practices.

426 452 •671 657 The liberal Kashmir government has adopted corrective measures for all agricultural credit. Kashmir now has a debtor's relief act designed to discharge extortionate debts and to provide repayments in convenient installments. It is now the law of Kashmir that no landlord can charge any interest on a loan to his tenant. And moneylenders today are restricted by law to 5 per cent on their LOANS.

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loans. But ancient habits are hard to break. I do not know the extent to which these new Kashmir laws are observed. There are ugly stories about current usurious practices. About 95 per cent of the agricultural loans in Ladakh are repayable in kind. Monasteries advance food in the winter to tenants. Barley advanced when the grain is sixty cents must be repaid when the grain is thirty cents. Isn't repayment of twice the amount of the loan a kind of usury?

Kashmir has gone far in breaking up its feudal system based on landownership. Under its new law every landowner is entitled to keep 182 *kanals* of land. The government has taken the rest of each owner's holdings and distributed it to the tenants. In the vicinity of Leh over twenty thousand acres have passed from twenty-four landlords to the peasants. The distribution at Leh, as at other places in Ladakh, was free, the peasants not paying for the land. Nor, to date, has the government paid the owners any compensation. Whether or not they should pay is a political question that agitates Kashmir.

Payment of just compensation, in the American sense, is impossible. The holdings were so large and so vast that it would take all the wealth of the state to compensate the old owners by our constitutional standards. Nehru and I discussed the problem in Delhi in August 1951.

"If the former owners get paid the full value of their land they will still own the wealth of the nation," Nehru said. And they would. New people would own the land. But the bulk of the revenues would still flow to the old owners.

Various ideas are being discussed for compensating the owners: payment that avoids confiscation; an annuity to the owner for his life and a lesser annuity to his children for their lives. What Kashmir will eventually do has not been decided. But in two important respects Kashmir has not touched the land problem.

It has not distributed the landholdings of the King of Ladakh, who completely owns the village of Stok not far from Leh. It has

425 not distributed the landholdings of the monasteries. Though some twenty thousand acres were taken from twenty-four landlords in the vicinity of Leh, as I have said, nine thousand acres, belonging to the monasteries, were left untouched.

671/ 423 792 425 The truth is that the Kashmir law excepts these holdings from its operation. In the case of the King of Ladakh, the exception is not important, for his holdings are not great. He probably was excluded because the monasteries all around his estate were excluded. The monasteries were excluded because the power of the lamas is so great that the government did not deem it expedient to disturb the status quo.

I heard various versions of that decision. One official in Leh said to me, "If a monastery has five hundred lamas, in fairness each lama would be entitled to 182 *kanals* on a redistribution of the land. That would at times result in an increase in the holdings of the monastery."

Another official had a different view: "If the lands are taken from the monasteries, who will support them?" he asked. He went on to explain that, while the monasteries collect some funds from the people, these funds are inadequate for the support of the lamas. The people are poor and can give very little. What they do give are small sums on festival days, on marriages, and the like. There is no sustaining congregation as we know it. The monasteries are utterly dependent on the land for their support.

This official added, "If the lands are taken from the monasteries, then the government must support the monasteries. That would be bad."

"Because church and state should be separate?" I asked.

"No. Because the government could not afford to maintain the monasteries."

192 The bald truth is that the lamas are a powerful political force. The position of the lamas is strong. If A were running against B for public office and the lamas sent word down that B was hostile to the church, there is no doubt A would be elected.

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the Mongols. The Mongols always came to India to plunder, not to rule. The Moslems, who were Aryans, first came to India to propagate their faith in the ninth century. They took over the rule of India in the twelfth century. And so it was that the Maharajah of Kashmir, militant in his faith and with an eye to its propagation, agreed to drive the Mongols from Ladakh on one condition. The condition was that he be allowed to build a mosque at Leh. He pointed out that many of his faith followed the caravan route from Srinagar to Leh to Yarkand and yet had no holy place during their long absences from Kashmir where they could pray to Allah. The King of Ladakh, more intolerant of the Tartar invader than the Moslem proselytizer, agreed to the condition. The mosque has thrived ever since.

The castle of the King of Ladakh, like the King himself, has not thrived. It stands on a cliff behind the mosque and towers over the town. It rises many stories, like an awkward skyscraper. Once it was a place of splendor. Here visiting royalty was entertained and feasts were spread. It was to this castle that emissaries from the various provinces of Ladakh sped with payments of taxes and promises of loyalty. It was in this castle that the kings of Ladakh made their compacts with lamas and so, through the use of spiritual power, welded together into a compact political unit the eight principalities of Ladakh.

The lamas still thrive. Their monasteries now hold the great wealth that this castle once commanded. The lamas utilized their spiritual power to acquire temporal strength. In the end, they surpassed the temporal power that gave them their freedom. The castle of the King of Ladakh, to be sure, still stands. But it is today empty—filled with cobwebs, bats, and the memories of an ancient power that events have transferred to other hands.

The law of Ladakh, administered by the ancient kings, had all the cruelty of our own early system. Ladakh knew trial by ordeal. It was resorted to when the evidence was unsatisfactory, when the judge with his human limitations needed supernatural wis-

671 dom to divine where the truth lay. Sometimes an accused would
675 have to draw a red-hot iron through his hand or take a stone out of a pot of boiling oil. If he did this without injury, he would be in the clear. (The legends persist that there was a secret art for protecting the hands against such ordeals.) Sometimes the judge, when confused by the evidence, would cast lots instead and in that way determine on which side the truth lay.

681 Capital punishment in Tibet was cruel—pushing red-hot irons
674 into the temples, hurling the convicted person from a great height, smashing his joints with a hammer. In Ladakh, when a temple was spoliated or a person horribly murdered, the guilty one was either crucified or bound hand and foot, weighted with stones, and thrown into the Indus to drown. The usual punishment for crimes—whether adultery or theft—was whipping, fine, or imprisonment. There was a mounting scale of fury which society directed against the thief. For the second offense of stealing, he lost his left hand; for the third, his right hand; for the fourth, he was drowned in the Indus.

[173] At Leh I inquired about these practices, and I learned that they are now mostly history. They are history not only because the Kashmir law is an ameliorating one but because the Buddhist religion has made a vast difference in the lives of the people. Thus I could find in Leh no modern record of a crime of violence—murder, manslaughter, rape, assault and battery.

674 "Don't put too much reliance on the absence of rape," a junior officer laughingly told me. "The resistance point of the average Ladakhi woman is pretty low."

"How about killings?"

"None."

"Assaults?"

"None."

"Not even between husbands in polyandric families where several brothers must share one wife?"